

The Curse
OF
Septic
Soul-Treatment.



MAUD
BALLINGTON
BOOTH

BV
4012
.B59
1892

3

Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



FROM THE LIBRARY OF
ROBERT ELLIOTT SPEER



BV 4012 .B59 1892
Booth, Maud Ballington, 1865
-1948.
The curse of septic soul-
treatment

LIBRARY OF THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FEB 20 1959

THE CURSE
OF
SEPTIC SOUL-TREATMENT

BY

MAUD BALLINGTON BOOTH ✓



FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

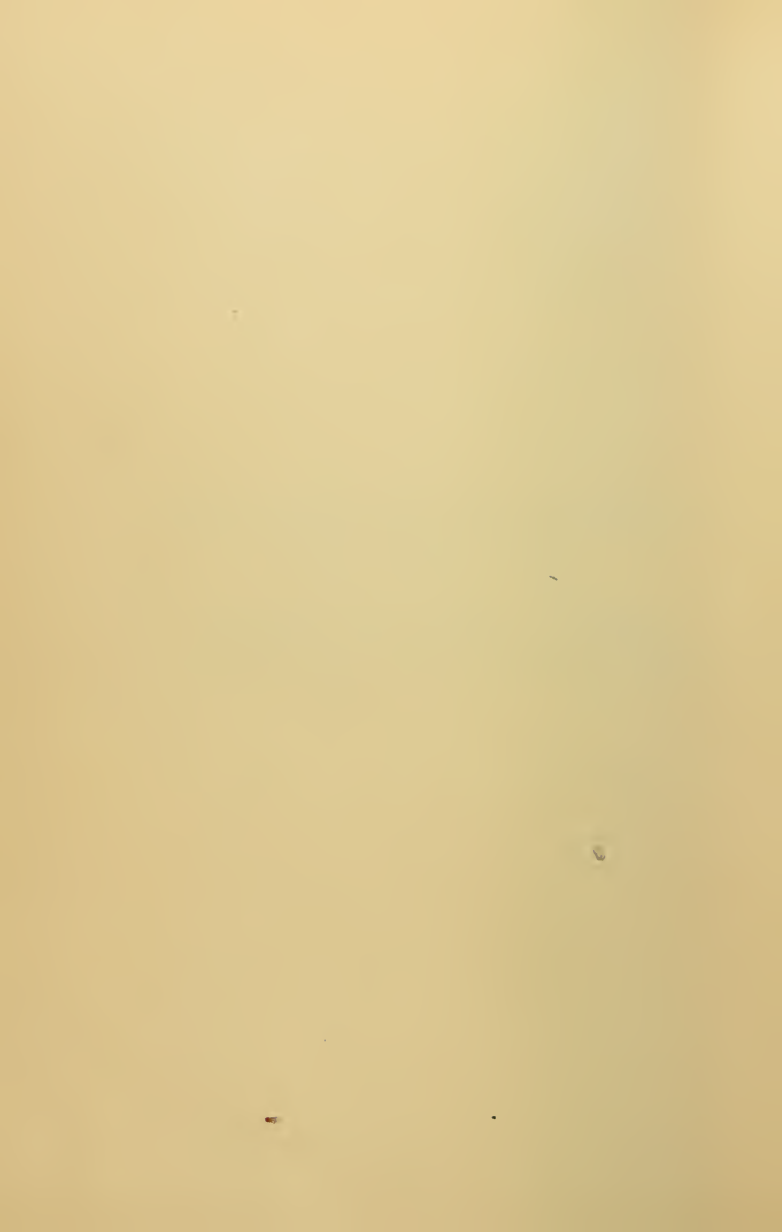
NEW YORK
30 Union Square E.

CHICAGO
148 & 150 Madison St.

Publishers of Evangelical Literature.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1892,
By FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY
In the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

THE CURSE OF
SEPTIC SOUL-TREATMENT.



THE CURSE OF SEPTIC SOUL-TREATMENT.

“IT cannot now be successfully denied that the surgeon’s acts determine the fate of a fresh wound, and that its infection and suppuration are due to his technical faults of omission or commission.”

.
“On taking charge of a fresh wound, the fearful and often irremediable consequences of a first false step should be always present to the mind of the surgeon, and his attention should be directed chiefly to the avoidance of septic infection.”

.
“It is a great mistake, paid for by the loss of limbs and lives, to believe that the mastery of practical cleanliness, or asepticism, can be acquired without a clear comprehension of the principles, and without earnest and severe training in the handicraft of asepticism.

“The wholesome truth, that failure of achieving primary union in fresh wounds is mainly and almost always

due to one's own lack of knowledge and skill, and that these attributes can be secured only by the exercise of great diligence, should be constantly present to our minds. Failures are bitter lessons, but their honest study will inevitably bring to light the causative deficiencies, and will teach us to avoid them." GERSTER.

With the changing of a few words, the foregoing remarks can be read with profit, and applied to the experience of those who have accepted the mission of spiritual physicians for dealing with the souls of men.

That the treatment of souls is no easy or light task, but one that needs Divine wisdom and untold care, is apparent when we consider that things spiritual are far more vital and momentous than things corporeal, and that it is easier to combat tangible and visible difficulties than those things which are unseen and immaterial. The disastrous effects of injudicious and bungling efforts can be seen around us plentifully, and daily souls are making shipwreck through conflicting lights that

lure them on to the sand banks or rock reefs of despair, though with the avowed intention and desire of guiding them safe to the harbour.

The Surgeon voices a truth to which every honest heart should say *Âmen* in those closing words: "*Failures are bitter lessons, but their honest study will inevitably bring to light the causative deficiencies, and will teach us to avoid them.*"

Realizing the great and important responsibility that rests upon the dealer with souls, and accepting the truth that "the fearful and often irremediable consequences of a first false step should be always present in our minds," let us honestly view the subject, asking wherein the dangers lie, and how we can best avoid or remedy them.

Have you your diploma? is a question we should ask of all who step forth to this work; for in this, as in all other re-

sponsible matters, it is utterly useless to attempt work unless qualified. The man who dares to practice surgery or prescribe medicine without being thoroughly authorized and qualified for so doing, is not only liable to punishment by law, but, even if not detected and so punished, is pretty sure to make a bungle of his work, and by fatal errors prove his unfitness and ignorance. I truly believe there are many just in this relation to the great spiritual field of operation. I do not mean that they are practicing without a man-given degree, or the laying on of hands, or theological training, or correct adherence to creed and ritual. These are but minor considerations, for the great vital issue is — Are they called, commissioned, and qualified of *God*?

If not, they can be but blind leaders of the blind.

No one has a right to deliver a message unless the message is given them of God ;

to go on a mission unless sent by Him, or to attempt work that is chosen and cut out by themselves irrespective of His will and commands. Those who have not received a baptism of His Spirit, who do not possess His heavenly seal upon their diploma, had better step back, for, for them to tamper and meddle with the spiritual welfare of others, will only mean failure to themselves, and disaster and ruin to the patients they try to help.

Over and over again have I heard from the lips of those who long to be used in God's service, the bitter regret that they lack the power and ability to be successful, and that they never seem able to efficiently help the poor groping soul out of darkness into light.

"I do not know what to say when I kneel at the sinner's side. I feel perfectly helpless, and can only mourn over my lack of knowledge." This I have repeat-

edly heard them say, but I am confident that it *need* never be the case.

When God commissioned his prophets of old, he always gave them something definite to say, and their success depended greatly on their delivering it correctly, and not improving or detracting from it to suit their own ideas. We find that when sent by him and obeying his instructions, they were always efficient. Why should this state of things be changed to-day? God is the same, and if we have confidence that our commission is of Him, we have the right to claim His Divine wisdom. That it does need *wisdom*, and that we must learn of Him how to do the work, is undeniable; but He has promised special guidance to those who obey the leadings of His Spirit, however weak they may feel in their own strength.

There is another fact that we cannot emphasize too strongly, namely, that he

who would heal others, must himself be proof against infection, that those who are to be dealt with may not have it in their power to say, "Physician, heal thyself." While strong with that strength that comes with purity of heart and soul, we can go to the sinner's help and deal hand to hand with his doubts, his sins, his uncleanness, fearlessly, and come out unscathed and uncontaminated. But if there is unsoundness—however small—in our own hearts; doubts as to the truths we are speaking to him; or, hidden away some known sin which has not been surrendered; we are unfit for our work.

Strikingly was this thought illustrated by a misfortune that overtook a friend of mine in his surgical work. He was engaged in making his hands aseptically clean before an operation, when a bristle of the brush he was using punctured his thumb just below the nail. It was so

slight and apparently insignificant an injury that he took no notice of it, and almost forgot its existence as he proceeded to operate. The case happened to be a septicallly infectious one — tuberculosis. That evening he felt pain and throbbing at the point where the skin had been injured. The next day spreading acute inflammation set in, and it was evident that septic matter had entered through that minute puncture. What was the result? *First*, pain, loss of sleep, and endless anxiety and misery to the sufferer. *Second*, what was even worse and more trying to him, inability to use his hand, which meant for weeks the necessary abandonment of operative work.

Now, it seemed to me, as I listened to the history of this septic infection — the poisoning of the blood — that I heard also the history of misfortune to many a once useful soul saviour. The little un-

guarded sore spot, the apparently insignificant inconsistency, the small beginning of what proves to be the door of admittance to soul-poison — sin — what is the result in the spiritual analogy? Pain, remorse, and sorrow — yes, and even backsliding of soul! It also means inability to undertake God's work — the abandonment of the divine mission to which they have been appointed by Him. Worse still, it often results in casting stumbling blocks in the road of those who should have been helped upward, and thus furnishes them with an excuse for their hurrying downward steps.

My friend quickly and effectively brought his knowledge of the power of antiseptics to bear upon the infected wound; and after free incision and persistent irrigation with antiseptic fluids, and the greatest care, he managed to stop the spread of the trouble at the first joint, thus saving his hand and arm, and possibly his life. But in many

cases, as slight an injury as this has been the beginning of trouble that has not stopped until it has resulted fatally. A pin prick, a scratch, the tearing of a nail, has often proved the commencement of that which has ended in the poisoning of the whole system. As for the surgeon, the very smallest wound upon the hand makes it unsafe to deal with a case which is infected by pyogenic germs. In the soul, many a time has poison entered through some small and unheeded door, which has been considered utterly insignificant; yet the entrance has resulted in eternal ruin. It is therefore but the sound — the whole-souled — the one made and kept pure by God, who can do the work effectually and without danger.

There are many who say that the sin-polluted should be avoided for fear of contamination, who tremble at the thought of entering dens of infamy to rescue their

victims, and who seem to think that the only way to remain unstained in soul is to keep apart in the company of the elect, and "in the congregation of the righteous." But if our religion is worth aught to us, it must be of the kind that can surround us with a wall of fire, which will burn and destroy the septic germs ere they can assail our soul. And of what possible good can we be in fulfilling Christ's mission of seeking and saving the lost, if we confine ourselves merely to the ninety and nine in the fold?

Christ himself shows us how we can deal with sin and yet be ourselves pure by His life of constant contact with the infected, and yet of spotless purity.

Perhaps one other case in point may make the analogy plainer. The loathsome disease of leprosy in Palestine is not infectious in one sense, while in another it is so: the safety or danger depends entirely upon

the condition of the one touching or associating with the leper. With impunity you can do so if you yourself are whole and healthy. But should you have upon your hand a sore, however small, or even a scratch, through which the "bacillus lepræ" can enter, you would yourself become infected with that dread disease. The moral and spiritual leper, however foul and vile, can be approached and successfully dealt with by the one who has a pure strong hand and God-filled heart, but let him who is not sure of his own state beware lest he himself become contaminated, and a source of danger to others. Sin is very deadly, very easy to contract, and very disastrous in its far-reaching results.

Elsewhere I have spoken of the need of purity of heart and hand in the anti-septic Christian's life work; but the analogy was again forcibly brought home to me at a word dropped by a surgeon in the

operating room. I had not seen him for months, and on entering the room while he was making his hands aseptically clean, we exchanged greetings. He said, turning to me, "Excuse me, but your hand is unclean." I knew what he meant. Should he have shaken hands with me, he dare not operate on the patient awaiting him, for, surgically speaking, I was unclean; and it would mean to him, the labor of again preparing himself for his work. So there are many hands stretched out to help God with His mission, to whom He must say, "No, I cannot use you. You are unclean!" And, alas! some of those that were clean and ready for use, have become contaminated by shaking hands with the world, touching "the unclean thing," and, remember! but one touch will disqualify for service. If, however, we have been ourselves thoroughly cleansed and prepared for active service — as Anti-

septic Christians, we must see the crying need of employing at once the most direct, radical, and effective measures to check the awful devastations of septicism in the hearts and lives of others.

In these pages I desire to speak chiefly of the technique of dealing with the soul that *has already been aroused to a sense of its danger*, the one that is anxiously looking for cure after having received the arrow of divine conviction and having been shown by the light of God its wretched state in the present and its danger for the future. It is at this point that the greatest importance must be attached to the words, actions, and advice of the one who steps forward as spiritual helper.

In the competent dealing with any disease and the checking of its ravages, one of the first steps is to make a *correct diag-*

No over-estimate can be made of the importance of care in this respect. The

surgeon who lances, cuts, or lays bare the tissues without having watched or compared symptoms, sounded, examined, and applied necessary tests to satisfy his own mind as to the complaint and the stage to which it has advanced, would be considered dangerous and untrustworthy by his surgical colleagues; and woe be to the luckless patients who intrusted their lives to him! Now, for what reason all these precautions should be utterly forgotten, or thought unnecessary, by God's workers over the poor broken hearts and wounded souls of men, I do not know! Why not be as practical? The analogy seems to me to demand it! The physician who should give one and the same remedy for all symptoms and ills, or the surgeon who made it a practice to perform a capital operation on *all* who came to him, regardless of the indications of the different cases, would rightly be considered a quack and a fraud. On the spirit-

ual operating table, over and over have I seen this done with the most disastrous effects, and done with apparent innocence, as if it was quite a natural proceeding. The line of argument for this most dangerous practice seems to be the following: "Why, all sinners are sick with the disease of sin; there is but one remedy; so you must apply it, and leave the rest to God." The fact that nine tenths of all the complications met with in surgery are of micro-organic origin would not in any way justify a laxity in diagnosis, or the use of but one treatment. The knowledge that there are many different species of noxious bacteria, and that each species produces entirely different effects, and can only be grappled with through a knowledge of its nature and action, and a careful adoption of the most successful of the many known treatments, if anything, makes the surgeon more watchful and cautious in making his diagnosis. So in soul sickness, the cause

may be sin, but the different multiple forms of sin call for a most careful indication.

You kneel beside a man whose ears are open to your words of advice, and whose heart is anxious to catch your message, much as a drowning man is ready to clutch the rope thrown to him.

How do you know what to say to him? How do you know what he needs? What will have the right effect? What will help him over the dividing line between his sinful past and his possibly bright and useful future?

“Quote Scripture, that surely must be right.” No, not at all. Sometimes that might be quite as harmful as your own misguided remarks. How do you know what verse will apply to his need and enlighten his eyes?

“Why, trust to the guidance of God—pray to be led, and then you cannot go wrong.” Praying to be led is certainly

right, but God also wants us to be led through the heart and brains he has given us.

The surgeon who prayed to be led to the right instrument and then, shutting his eyes, seized one at hap-hazard and immediately commenced to operate with it, would be defying Providence. Whereas he might with profit use his knowledge, former experience, and common sense in choosing an instrument and then pray to God that it might do the work well and successfully. Though in things spiritual the literal application of this last statement must be modified, there still remains the truth shown forth by it that the Christian worker must watch as well as pray, must use in the execution of his work every faculty and power, every symptom manifested by the soul he seeks to bless, and every memory of past experience (either in his own life or in those he has formerly helped), that will enable him to do the work well

and successfully. To this end our first care should be to make clear to our own mind the state of the seeker with whom we deal. In other words we should use the probe ; we should examine, test, and try his spiritual condition. The chief cause of trouble in the hidden depths of one soul may be a dark crime unconfessed, with another an indomitable will that will not bow to God's purposes, or a violent ungovernable temper. Then there are other things, such as the worship of idols ; the idol of gold, of worldly fame, of selfish indulgence, or of any one unreined or unlawful passion and sometimes the all-absorbing worship of self. Again there is doubt arising from infidel notions, and in hearts blighted by it will be found the inability to exercise that long-neglected, and now almost paralyzed talent, *faith!*

Who dares to assert that all these different phases of the question, all these causes

of trouble should be treated in the same manner indiscriminately?

It is quite true that there is only one remedy, but there are many ways of opening the soul to it, and many ways of leading the sinner up to the point where it can be applied.

This preparatory dealing with the soul must be done in the way suited to the special case in point, just as in the extirpation of the noxious microbes that have infected some wound there are many different modes of treatment, though they are all means to the same end, viz., the absolute eradication of these minute causes of inflammation and suppuration. Sometimes the evacuation of an abscess and irrigation with antiseptic fluid is successful, at other times the whole infected tissue must be cut away, or possibly a joint or bone excised and sacrificed to check the spread of the disease.

Now with the soul the giving up and extraction of sin is the point to be aimed at, and the thorough cleansing of the soul by the precious blood of Christ, which is the great antiseptic of the spiritual world, that the sinner may become a redeemed child of God, and be every whit made whole. But sometimes to this end, in the words of Scripture, there has to be a plucking out of the right eye and the cutting off of a right hand. Who dares offer to the soul unconditional pardon when such conditions have not been complied with, and the idol is still clung to, or the sore spot is still covered? Surely this must show us clearly that each soul, with its own special trouble and peculiar need, has to be dealt with in the way best suited to bring it to the desired end.

I think just here I cannot do better than mention the curse of one mode of septic soul-treatment which has long been in

vogue, and which I fear has been the cause of more misleading of souls, and salving over of spiritual wounds "with untempered mortar," than any other disregard of the laws of soul asepticism that I could mention.

It is the application indiscriminately to all of the "only believe" remedy. The word "believe" can only be safely uttered to the soul which is in a fit state to exercise saving faith, and when offered to the unprepared heart as the "one thing needful" it becomes a curse, a misleading fallacy, the planting of a new source of trouble in the already diseased soul.

O that soul physicians would beware of this dangerous treatment! Let us just look at its results for a moment. Supposing that at the close of a stirring and touching meeting, a man with softened heart and troubled conscience comes forward and kneels at the penitent form. I

kneel down beside him, listen to his sobs and groans, and then say, "What do you want, my friend?" "I want to be saved. I want to know I am right. I feel wretchedly unhappy." Unseen by me, there is a spot hidden away in that soul upon which God's finger rests. A dark corner into which God's light has been shed, and the newly quickened conscience has whispered to him, revealing the sin of an unlawful business in which he injures his fellow-men and defies the laws of God. Well, I lean over him and open my Bible, and say, "Do not distress yourself, my friend. Do not despair. You have come to God, and He can save you just now. Do you believe this verse?" Then I point him to the words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever *believeth* in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and then add, "Do you believe that?" The man, whose

difficulty may never have been doubt, and whose quickened conscience may believe only too keenly, will answer, "Yes, yes, I believe it," and I again say,—

"Well, do you believe God can save you?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe in *Jesus Christ*?"

Another affirmative.

"Well, dear friend, that is all. It is quite simple. Cast yourself on Him and trust."

And supposing the poor fellow, now thoroughly befogged by my illogical talk, and the utter want of harmony between my *soothing words* and his *accusing conscience*, mutters, "I will trust," and I immediately congratulate him upon his "new found joy," and call for the rejoicing of all present over this soul born again. What an empty farce it would be!

Were I thus to deal with the soul, I should be indeed the worst friend of that

poor sinner, and should be doing the Devil's work in the guise of a servant of God.

God help me, and God help the poor deluded wretch into whose soul had been inoculated by my words this septic doctrine. Why, the second state of that soul would indeed be worse than the first!

Such treatment would probably have one of the following effects upon him: First, the man might go away and live a hypocrite's life, hiding wrong and stifling conscience, saying, "All is well," while beneath all would be wrong, and the God of Justice still unappeased.

Secondly, he might see through the absurd fallacy of my irrational treatment, and, not having found what he wanted, might disbelieve in the whole plan of Salvation, and, throwing the whole thing up as utterly unsatisfactory, he might trample on his conscience and plunge into infidelity, stigmatizing all religion as humbug.

Or else, he might be so impregnated with this septic doctrine that he would really bring himself to believe in it, and, blinding his truer instincts of right and wrong, live in delusion, building upon a sandy foundation, and thinking himself safe, until overtaken by the great storm, which would prove the utter inefficiency of the rotten foundation upon which he staked his hopes of eternal life.

Now in either case, as the one who "had undertaken the charge of this fresh wound," I should be sadly to blame for the perhaps fatal consequences of this "first false step."

This supposed case that I have drawn up, in many instances finds its real counterpart, and demonstrates clearly the folly and danger of injudicious soul-treatment.

Alas that this should not be the quoting of possible danger, but the detailing of a course of action that is being used to-day in a very widespread fashion.

I have myself repeatedly seen and heard penitents thus dealt with. There are pulpits and platforms from which this salve for the guilty conscience is dealt out wholesale ; and many an "inquiry room," where it is applied personally to the soul wounds of those there dealt with. Books and tracts bearing this perversion of God's truth are being daily placed in the hands of men and women who want to know the real straight, plain way of Salvation — the *whole* truth, and not half of it.

Often after spiritual meetings do I go here and there among a row of seeking souls, and tremble as I see some well intentioned persons rise from the body of the Hall and advance toward them ; and then, as I listen to these quoting scripture, or pointing to the Bible (often checking and hindering the work of the Spirit), I realize how responsible each one of us must be for every soul that comes beneath our care.

To use a surgical analogy, this treatment may be compared to the work of a surgeon who should stitch up, and bandage, and endeavor to heal a wound full of impurity and infection, which, beneath the surface, would become a very hotbed of septicæmia, and the ultimate cause of death.

My denunciation of the "only believe" sepsis may, I am aware, cause some one at once to take exception to my words, and say, "Well, does not Christ Himself send this message to the sinner? Are we not right in showing His own words to the seeking soul? Christ says, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; he that believeth on me shall have everlasting life.'"

This verse must rightly be very precious to each of us, yet we have no right to misquote it to the man whose feet are not following and has not decided to follow "THE WAY," who has not forsaken his own way, and who will not be obedient to "THE

TRUTH," having still in his heart the vipers that would sting "THE LIFE" to death.

We cannot do better than ask ourselves the question, How did Christ deal with souls? and we soon find that He went straight to the root of the matter, and never salved over or excused. In fact He Himself made very little of *believing* and very much of *action*; despising love which did not produce its works and results. James and John *believed*, but their belief would have meant condemnation and curse to them, had they not *obeyed* and *forsaken* all, and followed Him.

Many others could be quoted, but I will turn to Christ's dealing with a soul that shrunk from the knife. The young Ruler came to him with the very question that hundreds to-day ask of us. Christ said not a word of faith or belief. First, he pointed him to the obeying and fulfilling of God's known law, and then laid his finger on the

weak spot, which showed that surrender was necessary before he could become heir to the kingdom. Christ had looked on him and loved him and his heart was far more pitying and tender and compassionate than ours. If such a thing had been possible, logical, or right, how much easier and pleasanter would it have been for Jesus to say, "Believe in me, and thou shalt have life, that is all thou needest to do." Christ, the heart reader, saw that the young man had not come to the point where these words could be safely uttered, and to answer him thus would have been the perverting and reversing of His own plan of Salvation. In dealing with anxious souls we have no right to give them the last message first. It is not ours to wrest comforting passages from their connections, and apply them at our pleasure to those unprepared to receive them, and so cause them to become lies and *contradictions* of

the eternal truth. Of those who thus lazily or ignorantly deal with souls, soothe over and make easy the way of Salvation, it could be truly said, "THEY DO CHANGE THE TRUTH OF GOD INTO A LIE!"

It would be better to point the sinner, who is trying to work up faith enough to still and smother an accusing conscience, to such verses as these, "Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? . . .

"What doth it profit though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him? . . .

"Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from *iniquity*."

Leaving the Scriptural side of the case, and the facts in the lives of Christ's disciples, which show clearly His views on the doctrine of faith, this remedy for the sin-

sick soul is clearly and blatantly irrational. The surgeon who could expect violated nature to do her work of regeneration of diseased tissue while the primary cause of the trouble was still allowed to remain and frustrate all her efforts, would be nothing short of a lunatic. Yet in God's field of operation we are exhorted to hope that God will do His renovating work in a heart and life that is only turned to Him in sentimental belief, and still hugs within it the root and cause of condemnation.

Never, never, can Christ do His work in the heart until it is willing to make the necessary surrender and pay the price. He will not accept bushels of faith, given as hush money by the soul who holds back the one thing for which He has asked.

Faith in the right place is a blessed thing, and serves as a swift wing on which the soul can rise to God. But of what use are wings while the bird is still fettered and chained? If we turn our at-

tention first to the breaking of these chains, we shall do well ; afterward we shall find little difficulty in teaching the free bird to fly. I think if some of those who, through want of thought or consideration or knowledge, thus deal with souls, would go back in their own minds to the day of their conversion, they would remember that they did not pass from death unto life in this irrational manner, and they could not do better, than simply deal with others as God dealt with them on that never-to-be-forgotten day. Should they, however, on looking back, find that no definite change ever took place in their hearts and lives, and that, instead of a knowledge and possession of Christ, they have but a belief and a religion of sentiment, they should at once settle the question that they are unfit to practice, having no Divine diploma, and being utterly unqualified.

We cannot expect such to know how to make a plain path for those they would

lead to a level to which they have never attained themselves.

The after consequences of this treatment should be fully borne in mind, for then it will not appear to us a mere trifling question of technique, but indeed a vital issue. The poor soul who receives, or imagines he receives Salvation through this quick and easy "only believe" gate is apt to lose it as quickly when doubt assails his soul. He has no stamina of power to resist temptation. There is already within him that which will readily respond to the attack from without, and he will only too soon succumb.

Clear and rational is the advice that St. James gives to souls, and if we are at a lack to know what to say to them, let us study point by point the following tests:—

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, purify your hearts ye double-

minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." Let us emphasize this to the sinner, somewhat as follows:—

“*Draw nigh.*” That is willingness to show anxiety to take the first step; the prodigal retracing his steps; the careless giving heed and turning toward God. It is backed by a promise, “*God will draw nigh to you;*” but you must do your part before God can meet you half way. He cannot save you against your will.

“*Cleanse your hands.*” You must be willing to let go filthy lucre, and the toys and baubles of this world. Your hands must no more be polluted by false gains. You must make up your mind to give your hands to God, for he will have clean hands, purified from all those things which have stained them.

“Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.” You have been holding back something, like Ananias and Sapphira. God sees it. Give it up! You have a hidden idol in your heart, and are inviting God to make His abode there in company with it. Down with the idol! Cast it out! God wants a purified temple. There are cobwebs of doubt, woven by the spiders of unconfessed sin and rejected light. Sweep out the spiders and webs. God cannot enter a double heart.

“Be afflicted and mourn. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.” O sinner, realize your present danger, and your wretched ingratitude of the past. You have crucified Christ in your life by your disregard of Him, your self-seeking, and your sins against light and knowledge, as truly as did the Jews. You have thrust the thorns into His brow, the nails into His loving outstretched

hands. You have broken His heart! Weep over it! Realize it! See yourself as you are. Verily this is no light matter. It is not to be treated as a mere choice of paths. It is the taking of the first right step, which, alas, shows you but too plainly how many false ones you have taken. Is it nothing to you that Christ has knocked and called in vain, time and time again, at your close shut heart's door?

Weep, you heedless one, and remember your light, empty, careless life has meant sorrow unto death to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. "*Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord.*" Go down at the foot of the Cross! Bow your stiff neck! Throw your pride to the winds! Remember, God will only save you in *His* way, not your own way, and until you say, "Not my will but Thine," He cannot do the work. When you bow down like the publican, and say, "God be merciful to me

a sinner," when you realize your own unworthiness and insignificance God will keep His contract for this part of the work and "*lift you up.*"

Now it seems to me that the soul thus dealt with, shown the way of Salvation on plain and definite lines, will be in no danger of fancying that the whole thing is but an easy painless declaration or acquisition of "faith," but will realize the importance of the step, and will see that there are two sides to the covenant, two parties to the transaction.

The healing of the "wound slightly" is the more dangerous, and in the long run the more painful treatment, though at the time it may appear kind and soothing and appeasing to the guilty conscience ; but the withholding of the knife or cauterizing fire, the veiling of the truth, can indeed be called the truest cruelty.

"It is heart breaking to see the sinner weep." Is it ? I always think it is a

beautiful sight. Anyway it is the only right and fitting thing. Did not Christ suffer agony and travail of soul for him? Did not He shed tears even unto blood and give His life, inch by inch, in the most awful death to redeem him? Should the sinner forget all this, and enter into the Kingdom through a painless, easy gate?

Is the surgeon such a fool as to stop his work because a little blood is lost, or to shrink from causing a little suffering? Sometimes the wound that bleeds the most profusely heals the most easily. In reality it is a provision of nature that the flowing blood should wash away those things which might have infected the wound, and hence a little loss of blood often makes the accidental wound *aseptic* that would otherwise have caused much trouble. The old saying still holds good that "the wound that bleeds well heals well," and I am sure I have seen this true in the spiritual analogy. The sinner that feels and

suffers enough over his sin to weep is far more ready to surrender and step out into liberty than he whose feelings are shallow and sorrows but on the surface.

This truth however is not realized by all dealers with soul wounds, and too often is the oil of consolation poured in too soon, and the whole work spoilt by the healing of the wound slightly without regard to the principles involved, through misplaced sympathy, and the meddling of over-anxious workers whose sensitive nerves cannot bear the sight of tears and sorrow.

Again the soul who feels superficially often only gets a skin deep religion. It is after a storm there comes the sunshine, and after the battle the victory, and the old saying of the Theban General holds true in this relation as well as others, "*Pax paritur bello*," "Peace," the true "*peace*" of the soul "*is born of war.*"

God's order of operation in soul-treatment is as follows : —

Conviction of sin, which engenders the realization of the need of Salvation.

Confession, when the soul comes to the point, "Lord, I have sinned."

Repentance, which, when true, means willingness to abandon sin, and do works meet for repentance.

Renunciation, which prompts the complete surrender of all, and the giving of life into the hands of God; and then will come God's part, *acceptance*, with the bestowing of His *pardon* and *Salvation*, after the washing away of sin by the precious blood of Christ.

To be truly successful in the treating of soul wounds we must bear these stages in mind, and must be careful never to reverse their order, or offer the last promises before the sinner has reached the ground upon which they can safely be offered.

I do not for a moment mean to imply that Salvation is a long process or one into which one has to grow. I most fully be-

lieve in the possibility of instantaneous conversion, and have repeatedly seen such cases, and noted how swiftly God can act when the soul is in the right attitude. His part is indeed instantaneous, but it *cannot be done* until the soul will comply with the required conditions. I have heard of people who have been seeking Salvation more or less for years and years, and did not gain it, because there were still conditions uncomplied with, but the instant they surrendered, God fulfilled His promise to them. The more we insist on the need of *thorough repentance* and *whole-hearted surrender* before the exercise of faith, the more shall we help to pave the way to speedy and safe healing of the soul. The more personal, pointed, and straight with the sinner we can be, the better for him. Let us not hesitate to call the sinner by his right name, and help him to see himself as such. Sin, in all its awfulness, with all its danger and fearful consequences, should be shown

up by our words in its true colors. The need of uncovering hidden things and making restitution for past wrongs, and showing forth the true fruits of repentance cannot be too forcibly dwelt upon.

Procrastination is ever the temptation of the sinner, even when almost on mercy's threshold, and he will do anything short of the one thing needful to appease his conscience, and to put off the taking of the last step. The terrible danger of delay, and of waiving the point at issue, the utter uselessness of trying to patch up and improve the condition of things with anything short of God's Salvation, must be reiterated by us, until they have no other excuse but to answer, "*I know* what I should do, but I *will not* do it." Then, and not till then, our skirts will be free from their blood.

A noted surgeon, in his work on modern surgery, speaks very strongly of the loss of life and limb occasioned by the fallacy

of trusting to topical treatment, the using of poultices to soothe, and the vainly trusting that their continued application will avoid the use of the dreaded knife or lancet. Such treatment in many cases has only served to intensify and extend the inward ravages of the disease, while the deluded patient has comforted himself in his suffering with the notion that it was doing the work which he would not yield to the far swifter and easier method of the surgeon's knife. Many a time when such a case has been brought to the surgeon the disease has gone too far, and he has found it utterly hopeless to save the patient's life. Alas, in things spiritual many an inward ill and wrong, many a cause of condemnation has been silenced and smothered beneath some plaster of good works, the turning of some new leaf, or application to empty forms and ceremonies. Good intentions and even good en-

deavors are often thus resorted to, while all the time the root of the matter is untouched, and they serve only to put the conscience to sleep, to hush anxiety and soothe the wakening soul back into lethargy.

When the sinner thus procrastinates and goes away unsatisfied, with the work but partly done, his wound too often becomes infected with new doubts and fears, infidel notions, and careless apathy, which result in the degeneration of better aspirations, and the deadening of conscience. This has the terrible result of spreading the evil so rapidly through his soul, that it makes his case a thousand times harder to reach and deal with.

In every operation for the removal of a virulent subcutaneous growth, the first work is that of *dissection*, the laying bare of the diseased parts, and the second that of *exsection*, or the eradication of the growth.

Now, could anything be conceived that could be more mad or foolhardy than an operation in which the first half alone was performed and the patient then allowed to go his way with the disease still existant and the open wound liable to become a hotbed of infection, inflammation, and suppuration. The natural consequence of course would be septicæmia and the patient's death would lie at the door of the surgeon who could allow so careless a piece of madness. In the surgical world it would be impossible for such a thing to happen, but, alas, alas, it occurs over and over again in soul therapeutics.

Therefore, when a sinner has come to his knees, and proves sincerely anxious to be saved, when his soul has been deeply cut by the knife of conviction, and God has laid bare the hidden cause of the trouble, we should use our strongest influence to show the utmost importance of let-

ting the Spirit of God do thoroughly the needed work. We should press him not to shrink back at the suffering or sacrifice involved; showing clearly that the Spirit had a two-fold work to do, not only that of dissection (the laying bare before the light of the hidden things of the heart), but also the exercising of the power to exsect and eradicate that which has been revealed, the latter of course depending entirely upon the willingness of the soul operated upon.

Many a time, in cutting away a cancer or tumor, good tissue, that is living tissue, *not* infected by the disease, has to be sacrificed and cut away with it, so as to give the malignant growth a wide berth, and make the work sure and thorough.

Many people, while cutting out, or giving up, some known sin, pointed out by God, are very careful to cut close round it, drawing the line only at that which is palpably *wrong*, and not doing away with the *doubt-*

ful things, which in their turn might become sources of condemnation. The importance of giving God the advantage of all doubts, and of running no risk of danger and condemnation, are points that should evidently be made clear by us to the soul whose future may hang thereon. Sometimes we hear it argued, "Do not be too hard on the sinner at first. Deal with him gently, and by degrees, and he will come right at last." This in some cases may succeed, where the conscience is very tender, and the soul sees without our help, step by step, what God requires, and has the moral courage to fight the battle through unhelped. But in only too many cases it proves a great mistake and the cause of ultimate disaster. Those who are faithfully dealt with at the onset, when the soul is tender and pliable, will naturally start out into the life of Christlikeness, and self-sacrifice pointed out to them ere they took the first step,

while others who were not clearly shown what Christ-following would mean to them, become staggered and overpowered when met by the necessity of practically giving up self-pleasing, and living out the surrender they had made in *spirit* and *sentiment only*. Show the saloon-keeper that his Salvation will mean giving up his business, and hold out no hope of his acceptance until he has settled that question with God. Make it clear to the worldling that he will have to sever his connection with all that is Godless and un-Christlike in the world. The same line of dealing should be taken with every separate special class of sinners, making clear to one and all, that religion in the future is to mean to them no mere change of belief, but Christlikeness in every sense of the word.

It may be said by some that such dealing with the soul on the verge of surrender would prove a discouragement and a check

to their zeal. Possibly it may with *some* as it did with the young man who went away sorrowful, but if the soul does not care enough about Salvation to pay any price for it, and to make a clear and definite surrender, he does not deserve it, and we have no possible right or excuse for fostering in him the delusion that he can have it and settle up with God at his leisure. He who does not count the cost before the act only too often backs out of paying the price when the testing hour comes.

There would be less weak-kneed, faint-hearted, lukewarm following of Christ if soul wounds were more faithfully, radically, and aseptically treated at the onset.

“For unto you it is given, on the behalf of Christ, not only TO BELIEVE ON HIM but also to *suffer* for His sake.” This verse would indeed prove helpful to many a newly born soul as a guerdon from Christ, clearly defining the fact that belief in Him

is but to prove the incentive to acceptance of His cross, without which the Christian life is a mere sentiment and paradox.

The soul that goes forth from the day of its new birth to walk with Christ, to work for Him, to publish His goodness, to exalt His name, and to seek other wandering ones, will prove a strong and healthy Christian. We, as advisers to souls, cannot be too emphatic in speaking to them of the importance of setting to work right away, of taking the cross up at once, and not putting it off until they have grown older and stronger upon the Christian road; for God has promised that His follower shall be given strength to bear it, and surely He who knows our hearts would never give us a cross too heavy for our strength, without giving us a fresh supply of strength with which to meet it. Work is a blessed safeguard in the hour of temptation. It is fuel to the fire of the soul,

and deepens as well as proves the love of the Christian. Hundreds there are to-day cold, half-hearted, and indifferent, who have become so largely from having had no practical vent for their first love, and having had their ardor damped by being told to stand back, when impelled by new-born desire to be up and doing for their Lord. Let the convert on his knees see this in the future to which he looks with such bright expectation. Tell him that the service of his heart and life must be no sinecure, no honorary service, but a real practical work, and that whether it be in the home, the office, the workshop, the pew, or the pulpit, it matters not, it must be sincere and whole-hearted, sealed by the right motive, *love for Christ*.

Though our actions and services are of the greatest importance, and their faithful discharge a matter of grave responsibility

in the leading of souls from darkness to light, let us beware lest we foster that spirit which says, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas." The magnifying of the instrument often proves an active agent in preparing the soil of the heart for the inroads of future infection, and it but too readily succumbs to the first insidious attacks of pride, envy, malice, hatred, and vainglory, which, alas, engender strife, and drive away the blessed peace of God.

Let us remember, and ever make clear to others, our relation to the soul, and our real part in the operation that unites the soul to God.

A nerve has been severed by accident or during operation and has remained for months and perhaps years separated and useless, yet operative skill can resect the buried nerve ends, and unite them again, restoring the lost functions.

To this end, especially when there has been much loss of substance, it is necessary to interpose an aseptic absorbable body such as catgut, or decalcified bone tube, to serve as a temporary scaffolding for the products of tissue proliferation. Sutured to this connecting substance the nerve reunites, using it as a bridge over or through which a union can take place. When this end is accomplished the bridge or scaffolding is no longer needed and disappears by absorption.

Of course it is absolutely indispensable that the connecting substance, be it bone, or cat-gut, or nerve tissue, be *thoroughly aseptic*, otherwise it would prove worse than useless, not only failing in its mission, but itself proving a cause of new infection.

This it seems to me is the relation of the soul seeker to the sinner and his Saviour. The poor soul has wandered far from God

—is lost—buried beneath numberless hindering obstacles. To a great extent function is destroyed; power to serve God, to live right, to be pure and good is gone—even feelings, desires, and aspirations for things Divine, in many cases are wanting, but we believe that all these functions of the soul can return if it only be brought near to God, *reunited*. Hence we are sent out by Him to seek out these powerless ones, and thus to serve as the antiseptic bridge between the hearts human and Divine.

When this is accomplished our part is done, and the soul is in a position in which, being directly in touch with God, it can learn of Him; can feel, understand, and respond to things spiritual, which before were incomprehensible to it. At this stage the more we can put ourselves out of sight, and the more the soul can be made to realize the need of *reliance on Christ alone* the

better for its present welfare and future Christ-following.

Finally we are faced with the fact that it is only a thoroughly aseptic Christian that can thus step back, leaving the place for Christ first and foremost, while he who is himself septicly contaminated will make his presence only too forcibly felt as the cause of trouble to the poor groping soul that has trusted to a false and unreliable bridge.

Popular Vellum Series.

Chaste Paper Covers, 16mo, 32 pages, each 20c.

May also be had with very choice hand-painted floral designs on covers, each 50c.

How to Become a Christian. Five Simple Talks.
By Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D.

1. Disciples or Scholars. 2. Believers or Faithful.
3. Followers or Soldiers. 4. Brethren or Members of the Household. 5. Saints or the Holy.

The Four Men. By Rev. James Stalker, D.D.,
author of "The Life of Jesus Christ," etc.

1. The Man the World Sees. 2. The Man Seen by the Person Who Knows Him Best. 3. The Man Seen by Himself. 4. The Man Whom God Sees.

The Fight of Faith and the Cost of Character.
Talks to Young Men. By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

To those who have not yet become acquainted with Dr. Cuyler's original and brilliant productions, this booklet will serve as an acceptable introduction.

Hope: The Last Thing in the World. By Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D.

This brochure has been prepared to complete the series of articles on "The Triple Graces," to which Prof. Drummond and Dr. A. J. Gordon are contributors.

The First Thing in the World; or, the Primacy of Faith. By Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D.

Dr. Gordon has rescued us from the danger of forgetting that faith in Christ is the foundation of our Christian life."
—*Record of Christian Work.*

The Message of Jesus to Men of Wealth. A Tract for the Times. By Rev. George E. Herron.
Introduction by Rev. Josiah Strong.

"Mr. Herron has put the law of Christ to all men, whether with wealth or without it—the law of self-sacrificing love—with a clearness and cogency, which demands for his paper this permanent form."—*Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

Power from on High: Do You Need It, What is It, Can You Get It? By Rev. B. Fay Mills.

"Earnest, cogent, bright, this brief discussion must appeal to all classes of readers. The mark it will make on mind and conscience will not soon fade away."—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

New York.

FLEMING H. REVELL CO.

Chicago.

The New Enlarged and Authorized Edition of a Remarkable Work.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SECRET OF A HAPPY LIFE.



This Work, the demand for which has been so great as to wear out two sets of plates, has now been put in entirely new form. The book having become an accepted classic in devotional literature, it was thought wise to issue this new edition in a compact form, and in a variety of bindings. Occasion has also been taken by the author to thoroughly revise the whole work, besides adding considerable new matter.

Few Books of a Religious Character have been accorded such Hearty and Universal Endorsement from all Denominations.

“To commend this work would seem almost superfluous; and yet to young Christians who may not know it, we cannot refrain from saying, Buy this book, and keep it with your Bible for constant study, until you have thoroughly mastered, in your own experience, the ‘secret’ of which it tells. It will transform the dark days of your life, as it has transformed those of thousands before you, into days of heavenly light.”—*New York Evangelist*.

“We have not for years read a book with more delight and profit. The author has a rich experience, and tells it in a plain and delightful manner.”—*Christian Advocate*.

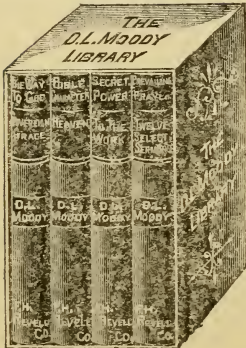
The “**Handy Classic Edition.**” 18mo, 292 pages as follows:
Each in separate box, gilt edge, round corners, except No. 3.

No. 3, Cloth, full gilt edges..\$ 85	No. 8, Persian Calf, Broken Glass Pattern. \$1 75
4, French Morocco, Seal Grain..... 1 50	10, Calf, plain..... 2 00
6, French Morocco, Rustic Gold Bands..... 1 50	12, Best German Calf Embossed..... 2 25
7, White Enamel, Easter or Wedding Edition. 1 50	14, Best German Calf Padded..... 2 50

The “**Standard Edition.**” 12mo, 210 pages as follows:
No. 01 Paper covers..... 50 | No. 02 Cloth, fine..... 75
No. 03 Cloth, full gilt edges..... 1 00

NEW YORK.: Fleming H. Revell Company.: CHICAGO.

Works of D. L. MOODY.



"By the strenuous cultivation of his gift Mr. Moody has attained to a clear and incisive style which preachers ought to study; and he has the merit, which many more cultivated men lack, of saying nothing that does not tend to the enforcement of the particular truth he is enunciating. He knows how to disencumber his text of all extraneous matter, and exhibits his wisdom as a preacher hardly less by what he leaves out than by what he includes. Apart from its primary purpose each of these books has a distinct value as a lesson on homiletics to ministers and students."—

The Christian Leader.

SOVEREIGN GRACE.

BIBLE CHARACTERS.

PREVAILING PRAYER; WHAT HINDERS IT. 30th Thousand.

TO THE WORK! TO THE WORK! A Trumpet Call. 30th Thousand.

THE WAY TO GOD AND HOW TO FIND IT. 105th Thousand.

HEAVEN; its Hope; its Inhabitants; its Happiness, its Riches; its Reward. 125th Thousand.

SECRET POWER; or, the Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work. 72d Thousand.

TWELVE SELECT SERMONS. 165th Thousand.

The above are bound in uniform style and price. Paper covers, 30 cents; cloth, 60 cents. Also the eight books are bound in four volumes. Price of Set, in neat box, \$4.00.

DANIEL, THE PROPHET. 10th Thousand. Paper cover, 20c.; cloth, 40c.

THE FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH. 7th Thousand. Some thoughts on Christian confidence. Paper cover, 15c.; cloth, 25c.

THE WAY AND THE WORD. 65th Thousand. Comprising "Regeneration," and "How to Study the Bible." Cloth, 25c.; paper, 15c.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE. 45th Thousand. Cloth, 15c.; paper, 10c.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. 45th Thousand. Paper, 10c.

INQUIRY MEETINGS. By Mr. Moody and Maj. Whittle. Paper, 15c.

GOSPEL BOOKLETS. By D. L. Moody. 12 separate sermons.

Published in small, square form, suitable for distribution, or inclosing in letters. 35 cents per dozen, \$2.50 per hundred. May be had assorted or of any separate tract.



1 1012 01232 2030

SUGGESTIVE BOOKS

FOR BIBLE READERS.

THE OPEN SECRET; or, the Bible Explaining Itself. By HANNAH WHITALL SMITH.

That the author of this work has a faculty of presenting the "Secret Things" that are revealed in the Word of God, is apparent to all who have read the exceedingly popular work, "*The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life,*" and such will not be disappointed in expecting to find in this new volume a fullness and sweetness in the unfolding of God's Word, in its application to the practical and daily duties of Christian living. 12mo, 320 pages, cloth, \$1.00.

BIBLE BRIEFS; or, Outline Themes for Scrip- ture Students. By G. C. and E. A. NEEDHAM. 16mo, 224 pages, cloth, \$1.00.

"Here are sermons in miniature, which any preacher will find it profitable to expand into sermons in full measure. True Biblical outlines are here; not artificial 'sketches,' but Scripture frame-works. Oh, that the preachers would depend on such frame-works, rather than on such *fire-works* as many of them attempt!"—*Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D., in The Watchword.*

"Here you have meat without bones, and land without stones. Mr. and Mrs. Needham will have the gratitude of many a hard-pressed teacher when he is hard up for a talk."—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

BIBLE HELPS FOR BUSY MEN. By A. C. P. COOTE.

Contains over 200 Scripture subjects, clearly worked out and printed in good legible type, with an alphabetical index. 140 pages, 16mo, paper, 30c.; cloth, 60c.

"The topics are familiar in thought and form, and are in many cases admirably adapted for Bible readings and for prayer meetings. 'Busy Men,' upon whom rests the responsibility of leading a meeting and choosing a topic, and especially of conducting an evangelistic meeting, will find this little book of decided value."—*The Golden Rule.*

"Likely to be of use to overworked brethren."—*C. H. SPURGEON.*

"Given in a clear and remarkably telling form."—*Christian Leader.*

CHICAGO. Fleming H. Revell Company. NEW YORK.

